

VZCZCXYZ0000
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBO #3499/01 3372111
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 032111Z DEC 09
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1380
INFO RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUCNFB/FBI WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHINGTON DC
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 003499

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/12/03
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR MEETS WITH NGO RECEIVING THREATS

REF: REF A: 09BOGOTA455; REF B: 09BOGOTA3365

CLASSIFIED BY: William R. Brownfield, Ambassador; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

SUMMARY

[11](#). (C) On November 27, the Ambassador met with Leon Valencia, Director of the Colombian think tank New Rainbow Corporation (CNAI). The Ambassador expressed concern over the threats CNAI had received in October. The discussion centered on CNAI's annual report that posits the GOC's democratic security policy is no longer an effective tool to confront the conflict in Colombia. The event received ample press due to President Uribe's tiff with CNAI over the annual report, though getting our pro-civil society message across to the public remains challenging. End Summary.

CNAI REPORT QUESTIONS DEMOCRATIC SECURITY

[12](#). (C) The Ambassador met with Leon Valencia, Director of left-leaning Colombian think tank New Rainbow Corporation (CNAI), for the second time (REF A) on November 27. Valencia outlined the conclusions of CNAI's annual report on the Colombian conflict entitled, "2009: The Decline of Democratic Security?," which was released November 25. Valencia said the report acknowledges successes under Democratic Security, but suggests the strategy may have "hit a wall" given what CNAI perceived to be a revitalization of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and a growth in paramilitarism.

[13](#). (C) Valencia acknowledged the difference between the national, hierarchical structure of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) and the current splintered, regionalized criminal organizations. Still, he defended CNAI's use of the term "paramilitary" to describe these groups because, he said, they maintain political and military links and are lead by the 21

high-level and 500 mid-level AUC commanders who never demobilized. He maintained the criminal groups conducted all activities of the AUC -- narcotrafficking, land theft, political control -- with the exception of counter-insurgency. The Ambassador suggested that, for many people, the term "paramilitary" specifically related to the AUC's counter-insurgency agenda and questioned whether these groups would not more appropriately be labeled as criminal gangs.

¶4. (C) Alluding to President Uribe's strong criticism of the CNAI report, Valencia said the GOC had "overreacted" to the report without actually reading it. He emphasized the report did not intend to delegitimize the real advances under democratic security, but rather to sound the alarm on the illegal armed groups' ability to successfully alter tactics to circumvent GOC measures. Ambassador Brownfield told Valencia that while the USG might not agree with CNAI's conclusions, he supported CNAI's right to debate the success of the democratic security policy in public.

CNAI RECEIVING THREATS,

POSSIBILITIES FOR PARTNERSHIP

¶5. (C) The Ambassador expressed concern that the CNAI's Narino office, as well as other groups including the United Nations Development Program, Movement for Victims of Crimes of the State (MOVICE), and Departmental Committee for Human Rights, were identified as military targets in a pamphlet allegedly issued by the criminal group "Los Rastrojos" in October(REF B). Turning to the Colombian Strategic Development Initiative (CSDI), the Ambassador outlined CSDI objectives and encouraged CNAI to offer suggestions for USG programs. Valencia said CNAI is developing a conflict monitoring project on the border with Ecuador that might prove useful to CSDI.

PRESS COVERAGE

¶6. (C) Following the meeting, the Ambassador and Valencia took questions from the press. With the GOC reaction to the CNAI report still fresh in the news cycle, the majority of press coverage (including Bogota daily El Tiempo with 1.2 million in circulation and RCN Radio with 6.7 million listenership) centered on the Ambassador's description of the successes achieved under democratic security. Some outlets, like CM& Television (1 million viewership), led with the Ambassador's comment that no policy is perfect and democratic security can be improved. While the press did not focus on the Ambassador's message of support for civil society, the visit was noticed and appreciated by NGOs.

BROWNFIELD